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COMMITTEE ON IMAGERY REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLOITATION

6 August 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Reconnaissance Office

SUBJECT : Imagery Reconnaissance in Support of SALT

1. To support special needs related to SALT, it is requested that the NRO launch an available CORONA (presumably KH-4 Mission 1115) in early to mid-September, following KH-8 Mission 4332. The NRO Staff has been alerted informally to this request and I understand that preliminary steps have been taken to preserve this launch option.

2. The special objective of this mission would be to maximize the continuity and extent of area search coverage available on Soviet strategic programs for baseline purposes related to the present SALT negotiations. Detailed mission guidance will be prepared by the ICRS of COMIREX. Current SALT proposals assume that dates will be selected against which various force levels and activity limitations will be keyed. Final agreement on baseline dates, and their timing, are subject to negotiations still in progress. We cannot therefore predict with certainty when or what they will be. It is important, however, to intensify to the degree feasible the area search coverage of selected portions of the USSR during the remainder of the year to assure maximum confidence concerning the exact numbers of strategic installations in existence under construction at any point in time.

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3. It is desirable for the CORONA to be additive to, not a substitute for, the subsequent HEXAGON (KH-9 Mission 1202) scheduled for October, but it is recognized that the HEXAGON schedule is somewhat uncertain pending final evaluation of all aspects of Mission 1201. While the limited quality and scale of CORONA photography is adequate to detect the construction of new missile launch sites or similar fixed installations of a known configuration, HEXAGON coverage is much preferred in the SALT context. It therefore will continue to be important to obtain HEXAGON coverage even though the CORONA provides relevant coverage in the interim.

4. While COMIREX guidance for Mission 1115 will emphasize unique SALT requirements, every effort will be made to utilize as much of the mission potential as is feasible against major overdue portions of standing requirements, or against other special needs.

5. We will, of course, remain alert to any major change in the present outlook and timing for SALT negotiations or in projected HEXAGON operations to assure that any new developments are taken into account.

Roland S. Inlow

Roland S. Inlow
Chairman

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